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ITEM 7:* PROGRAMME MATTERS, INCLUDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

FOLLOW-UP TO THE VIII MINISTERIAL MEETING ON THE ENVIRONMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Note by the Executive Director

The Executive Director has the honour to bring to the attention of the Governing Council the text of the resolutions adopted by the VIII Ministerial Meeting on the Environment in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Santiago, Chile, on 15 March 1993. The final report of the meeting has been issued in English and Spanish only: at the seventeenth session of the Governing Council copies will be available, upon request, from the secretariat of the Council.

The VIII Ministerial Meeting on the Environment in Latin America and the Caribbean was convened by the Government of Chile and the support of the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean as Secretariat, following Governing Council decision 10/2, Section III, in which the Council invited the Governments of the region to hold periodic regional intergovernmental meetings on the environment to formulate regional policies and strategies in that field. The VIII Ministerial Meeting was preceded by a Meeting of Government - Designated High-Level Experts.

The Governing Council may wish to take note of the resolutions attached in the Annex and to point out those measures which it considers appropriate for their effective follow-up, within the framework of UNEP's future activities.

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* Refers to the number of the item on the Provisional Agenda (UNEP/GC.17/1).

ANNEX

RESOLUTIONS OF THE VIII MINISTERIAL MEETING ON THE ENVIRONMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Santiago, Chile, 15 March 1993

The Ministers and Delegations attending the VIII Ministerial Meeting on the Environment in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Santiago, Chile, 11-15 March 1993, convened by the Government of Chile with the support of UNEP,

Fully aware that the conference of the United Nations for the Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 initiated a process that should lead all the other countries in the world to a sustainable development, reiterate their commitment to the implementation of the Rio Agreements, in particular, Agenda 21,

Fully aware of the need to adjust the existing structures as regards environmental regional cooperation to the challenges posed by the process initiated in Rio de Janeiro,

Taking fully into consideration the orientations with respect to institutional arrangements contained in Agenda 21 and those that may arise from the Commission on Sustainable Development,

Recognizing the value of the Ministerial Meetings and the relevant role played by the United Nations Environment Programme in the existing cooperation structure in the region,

Recognizing that Agenda 21, pursuant to paragraph 21, Chapter 38, recommends close coordination among the different bodies of the United Nations system at a regional level, in particular UNEP, UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), and that in our region it is convenient to incorporate inter-American and regional organizations such as OAS (Organization of American States) and SELA (Latin American Economic System) into this effort,

Recognizing the need to effect a meaningful decentralization of the activities of UNEP in order to promote an effective regional cooperation, in particular with UNDP and its Capacity 21 Programme and ECLAC,

Taking into account the need that this coordination be oriented to mobilize substantial new and additional financial resources to achieve the implementation of the regional programmes, projects and actions, within the framework of the Rio Agreements,

Recognizing that the implementation of Agenda 21 requires the expansion of the mechanisms to facilitate the involvement and interaction of all the actors of sustainable development, particularly the major groups mentioned in Section III of said Agenda.

RECOMMEND TO THE GOVERNMENTS

1. To expedite the elaboration of national programmes tending to the implementation of Agenda 21 in accordance with the actual conditions of each country.

2. To review and carry out the institutional modifications required, according to their own conditions, to formulate the strategies for sustainable development.

3. To continue to assign active support to the ongoing programmes of UNEP and to favour their linkage to Agenda 21 and other cooperation programmes in line with Agenda 21.

4. To favour and facilitate discussions, consultation with and participation of the major groups in the implementation of Agenda 21 at a national level, pursuant to Section III of said Agenda.

5. To make all efforts required in order to inform, as fully as practicable, all sectors of society of the outcome of the Rio Meeting and of Agenda 21.

CONCERNING REGIONAL COOPERATION ORGANIZATIONS AND, PARTICULARLY, UNEP, UNDP AND ECLAC

1. Take note of the reports presented by the Secretariat to the Ministerial Meeting.

2. Express their gratitude for the efforts made to date in relation with coordination activities, specially by UNEP, UNDP and ECLAC, in compliance with paragraph 27 of Resolution UNGA 47/191, as well as with paragraph 32, Chapter 38, of Agenda 21.

3. Recommend that UNEP enhances the decentralization programme, strengthening the capacities of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean by providing it with the financial and human resources necessary for implementing the ongoing programmes and those eventually arising from the process approved at this meeting. Request that the next Governing Council of UNEP continues to assign maximum priority to the Action Plan for the Protection of the Marine Environment and Coastal Zones of the South-East Pacific and to the Caribbean Action Plan, as well as the Executive Director to provide the regional coordination units with the required resources, for the support of both plans and their priority projects, and to assign a higher degree of autonomy in the management of such resources within the framework of the decentralization process.

4. Urge the next Governing Council of UNEP that, when considering the budget for the 1994-1995 biennium, it takes due account of the needs and priorities of Small Island Developing States of the region.

5. Recommend that UNDP addresses, in conjunction with the appropriate agencies, the implementation of Capacity 21 within the region as expeditiously and coordinatedly as possible, ensuring its linkage with the programmes of UNEP and ECLAC.

6. Recommend that agencies, particularly UNEP, UNDP and ECLAC, continue to make coordinating efforts in order to strengthen their support to sustainable development at regional level, and encourages them to establish the necessary mechanisms to avoid duplication of efforts.

7. Urge the concerned agencies to make regional efforts for strengthening the linkages with the current international, regional and subregional financial mechanisms and institutions such as GEF (Global Environment Facility) and IDB (Inter-American Development Bank) to mobilize financial resources with a view to implement regional programmes, projects and actions.

8. Request that actions be taken to ensure that the adoption of the decisions regarding the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity be made according to strict transparency criteria as well as pursuant to the objectives stated in the Convention itself.

DECIDE

1. To revise the existing regional consultation and cooperation mechanisms in the light of the outcomes of the Rio Meeting, so as to adjust them to the requirements of sustainable development and the effective implementation of Agenda 21.

To this end, ministerial meetings shall:

(a) Evaluate and follow up regional cooperation actions on environmental matters within the context of sustainable development;

(b) Examine the relevant matters on sustainable development within their competence;

(c) Discuss and coordinate, as far as possible, regional positions within the framework of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

2. To maintain an inter-sessional body to be composed of seven members, who shall be elected at the ministerial meetings on a rotational basis. Said body shall hold periodical meetings, at least twice a year, in order to follow-up the decisions adopted at ministerial meetings and supervise inter-agency coordination efforts for regional cooperation within the framework of the Rio de Janeiro decisions.

3. That the regional cooperation framework be supported by a technical secretariat composed of UNEP, UNDP and ECLAC. Said organizations shall seek to these effects the approval of their governmental authorities and submit to the intersessional body the functional modalities of this joint secretariat.